Specifics Of Developing Digital Competence In Teaching Foreign Languages Through Distance Education

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Abstract: This article examines the development of digital competence in the process of teaching foreign languages through distance education. The rapid advancement of digital technologies and the increasing demand for innovative learning formats require a rethinking of pedagogical practices in higher education. The study analyzes the methodological foundations, pedagogical conditions, and organizational requirements necessary for the effective integration of digital tools into foreign-language instruction. Special attention is given to the challenges encountered during the transition to online learning, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the psychological, technological, and methodological factors influencing students' readiness for distance learning. The paper reviews international experiences from countries with advanced digitalization practices, such as South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia, highlighting best practices relevant to higher education in Uzbekistan. The findings demonstrate that the purposeful implementation of digital technologies enhances students' motivation, autonomy, and information literacy, while also facilitating personalized learning pathways. The article concludes that the development of digital competence should be considered a multidimensional process requiring the integration of methodological, technological, cognitive, and psychological components.

Keywords: Digital competence; distance education; foreign language teaching; digital technologies; higher education; online learning; information literacy.

Introduction: The rapid development of innovative technologies in recent decades has significantly transformed the educational landscape, redefining both pedagogical approaches and learners' expectations. Digital competence, previously considered an additional skill, has now become one of the essential components of professional readiness for future specialists-particularly for students of philological and foreign-language programs. In the context of globalization and digital transformation, the ability to navigate digital environments, employ online resources effectively, and manage communication in virtual educational settings is fundamental.

Distance education, which has undergone accelerated development due to global circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has become a crucial medium for cultivating students' digital competence. Although distance education in Uzbekistan is still in the process of formation, the integration of digital technologies into foreign-language instruction has opened new pedagogical opportunities. These include flexibility in learning, personalized trajectories, instant access to diverse resources, and greater autonomy in acquiring knowledge.

However, the shift to digital learning has also exposed several challenges, such as insufficient methodological guidelines, limited experience among teachers, technological barriers, and psychological unpreparedness of both students and educators. Thus, understanding the specifics of developing digital competence within distance education requires a holistic analysis that addresses methodological, organizational, technological, and psychological aspects.

Scholars across the world have contributed to defining digital competence and its components within higher education. Researchers such as E.A. Troitskaya, A.V. Polishchuk, A.M. Yamaletdinova, and E.S. Polat emphasize the role of information-communication technologies (ICT) as essential tools for achieving pedagogical goals. According to Troitskaya, educational ICT must support communication and interaction

between all stakeholders-teachers, students, administrators, and the wider academic community.

In Uzbekistan, scholars including F.R. Yuzlikaev, U.Sh. Begimkulov, and G.N. Irmukhamedova have significantly contributed to the development of methodological frameworks for integrating ICT into the educational process. Their works highlight the need for systematic training, pedagogical design, and the development of digital learning resources adapted to local contexts.

International experience shows that countries like South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia have successfully implemented large-scale digitalization programs that combine technological infrastructure, teacher training, and the creation of national virtual learning platforms. These cases illustrate that the development of digital competence requires sustained investment, institutional support, and technological innovation.

The research is based on a qualitative analysis of theoretical literature, government policies, and practices of higher education institutions integrating distance learning technologies. Comparative analysis was applied to examine international experiences, while systemic and structural approaches were used to evaluate pedagogical, psychological, and technological components influencing students' digital competence. The findings are synthesized to outline a model of effective implementation of digital tools in foreign-language instruction.

The analysis revealed that digital technologies significantly enhance students' motivation, autonomy, and engagement in learning foreign languages. They provide opportunities for differentiated instruction, interactive communication, and access to authentic materials. However, several challenges hinder effective use of distance learning in Uzbekistan, including limited technological infrastructure, lack of methodological preparation among teachers, and insufficient digital resources.

Furthermore, psychological barriers-such as students' lack of confidence in navigating online platforms-affect the overall effectiveness of distance education. The findings also highlight the importance of structured pedagogical design, including clear learning objectives, instructional guidance, regular feedback, and assessment mechanisms. Distance learning is most effective when accompanied by teacher support and peer interaction.

International practices demonstrate that successful digital transformation requires government support, continuous professional development for teachers, and investment in digital tools. These findings confirm that the development of digital competence must involve the integration of cognitive, technological, and communicative skills.

The study concludes that the development of digital competence in foreign-language instruction is a complex and multidimensional process. It requires the integration of modern digital tools, methodological innovations, continuous teacher training, and psychological readiness among students. Distance education provides significant opportunities for enhancing students' digital skills, autonomy, and academic performance; however, its effectiveness depends on systemic support, carefully designed pedagogical models, and the availability of technological resources. The findings underscore the need for further research aimed at developing national standards and frameworks for digital competence in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan.

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